

III.—*Journal of a Tour through the Island of Rambree, (Rámrí; Sans. Rámdvati,) on the Arracan Coast. By Lieut. WILLIAM FOLEY.*

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The town of Rambree*, with its meandering creek, fine wooden bridges, and the handsome temples that surround it, is perhaps the prettiest spot upon the island; and from no place is it seen to such advantage as from the hill of *Koyandoung*. The creek is not very broad, but it contains sufficient water to admit of the approach of large boats to the market place—a matter of some importance in a country where land carriage is not to be obtained; or if procurable, would scarcely be available, from the absence of good roads, bridges, and ferries, throughout the island. The town is divided into the following compartments; viz. *Oung-tshiet*, *Shuwe-dong*, *Wedt-chu*, *Tath-tweng*, and *Taing-kuman*. The former commemorates the landing of the first Burmah chieftain at the ghaut of *Rambree*, when the island was first annexed to the dominions of Ava. In *Shuwe-dong*, a large pole, covered at the top with gold, was erected; and in its immediate vicinity, stood a house in which the conjurors† used to dance, invoking the aid of their favourite idol on the occasion of any calamity. *Wedt-chu* was so called from the great assemblage of pigs in that quarter. *Tath-tweng* was the site of the Burmah stockade, and now the locality of the Government jail, formed chiefly from the materials of that stockade. *Taing-kuman* is the place occupied by the *Kuman-thsí*, a class that shall be more particularly noticed hereafter. It is gene-

* Also called “*Táing*,” or “*Yáing-Ruah*” by the Mughs; the provinces *Rambree*, *Maong*, and *Thandowey* having suffered considerably from the incursions of the Burmahs and Thaliens during the year 791 M. S. the *Rájá* CHOU MOENG, on his restoration to the throne of *Rukkhein-preh* (Arracan), adopted such means as were likely to restore them to their former flourishing condition; and for that purpose, deputed his minister ANUNDA'-SUYA'H to proceed to those provinces, taking with him such Burmah or Thalien agriculturists and artisans as had been able to quit the country. ANUNDA'-SUYA'H, in the first place, visited *Rambree* Island, forming colonies, and giving names to the several new settlements, according to the various ominous appearances that presented themselves. It is said, that during the night his vessel lay at anchor in the *Rambree Creek*, a voice was heard to exclaim,

“*Tháin-lo!*” “*Tháin-lo!*” Stop! Stop! a favourable omen, inducing a further stay at the place, and the foundation of a town that received the name of “*Táing*” or “*Táing-Ruah*.”

† A set of vagabonds, receiving little countenance from the people at large. A man, attired in woman's apparel, connects himself with another of the profession, whom he calls his husband, and obtains for this husband a woman as his second wife, with whom both cohabit; every respectable native looks upon this class with disgust and horror.

rally admitted that the town has increased in size (though perhaps not in wealth) since it fell into the hands of the British; but this augmentation has been slow, and by no means equal to the expectations that might have been indulged on the change of rule. It would be foreign to the purpose of this brief sketch of *Rambree* to enter into a detail of those causes that seem to obstruct the accumulation of capital; but this much may be said, that the multiplication of taxes, by the intricate division of trades, and the vexatious nature of many of these taxes, is one grand check to the industry of the population; and from thence it is easy to deduce its consequences, as they may affect the revenue, or the morals of the people.

The whole of those improvements which have been made in the town of late years, and contribute so much to the comfort and convenience of the inhabitants, it owes to the taste and liberality of the magistrate* (now residing there), who has devoted large sums of money from his private purse towards the erection of bridges, market stalls, and other public buildings.

Noticing each class under a separate head, with the distinction of sexes, the number of souls residing in *Rambree town* will be as much as follows :

	Adult males.	Adult females.	Boys.	Girls.	Total of each.
Mugh,	1549	1637	1393	1224	5803
Burmahs,	554	473	359	375	1761
Kuman-thsí,	407	383	324	323	1437
Grand total of souls,					9001

In addition to the above there are a few Musalmans and Hindus; but their number is comparatively small, and their residence in the town (especially of the latter), attended with so much uncertainty, that I have not thought it necessary to include them in the *census*. The Musalmans were either (originally) adventurers from Cathaí and Ava, or owe their extraction to the Musalmans of Bengal, who fell into the hands of the *Rukkhein* marauders in earlier times, and were taken prisoners during the wars of the *Rukkhein-preh*† Rájás with the Nawábs of

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† Arracan, known in past times as *Rekhá-pura*; and so called from its having been the abode of the "*Rakkhus*," a fabulous monster, said to devour the inhabitants. The scene of this monster's alleged depredations seems to have been in the neighbourhood of what is now termed the "Fort of Arracan!" (*Mrou-u-mu*, built by Rájá CHOUMOENG, in the year of GAUTAMA 1150, and in the common era 792, or A. D. 1430.) On the extirpation of this monster, Arracan was termed "*Rukkhein-preh*," or "*Rukkhein-táing*," the country of the *Rukkheins*; an appellation equally common to the natives of Arracan with that of *Mugh*, or *Mogh*: the Barmahs substituting the letter *Y*, for *R*, call them "*Yukkhein*."

Chittagong and Dacca. They are now so assimilated to the rest of the population in dress, language, and feature, that it is difficult to conceive a distinction ever existed. As if ashamed of their Muhammedan descent, individuals of this class have generally two names, one that they derive from birth, and the other such as is common to the natives of Arracan, and by which they are desirous of being known. The Hindus, again, are generally natives of Chittagong and Dacca, who came down into Arracan to pick up what they can, returning to their homes so soon as a certain sum of money shall have been collected.

Under the head of Mughs (*Magas*) are included many inferior castes, such as the *Hyáh*, *Phrá-gyoung*, and *Dhúng*. Much uncertainty prevails with respect to the origin of these castes; it is either involved in obscurity, or totally lost to those with whom I have conversed upon the subject. By some, it is affirmed, that the *Hyáhs* were originally natives of a country beyond *Manipur*, but nothing further could be obtained, so as to facilitate a discovery of their descent, or account for their settlement in the province. In former days, the *Hyáhs* tilled the crown lands, were exempted from taxation, and gave one-half of the produce to the sovereign. It is insinuated by the *Rakkheins*, that not a few of the *Hyáh* caste were employed as eunuchs in the service of the Arracan Rájas. They now occupy themselves in the cultivation of *pawn* and *chilly* gardens, but are looked upon as an inferior caste, and consequently never intermarry with the *Rakkheins*.

The caste termed *Phrá-gyoung* now no longer abound in Arracan, or are so concealed, that it would be difficult to point out one particular person to whom this term can be properly applied. In Ava this class is still very numerous, more especially in the neighbourhood of the most celebrated temples* and *Kioums*; it being the duty of the *Phrá-gyoungs* to perform the several servile offices required, such as sweeping the sanctuary, lighting the fires, and spreading the mats in the monasteries. As a reward for these services, they are permitted to remove, for their own consumption, the fruits, grain, &c. that may be offered up to the *Phrá*. The *Phrá-gyoungs* are said to have sprung from those who, in a distant period, had been convicted of some offence, and were made slaves for the service of the temples as a punishment for the same.

The *Dúngs* are believed to be of *Hindu* extraction; their appellation so like to that of the *Dhúms* of India would seem to corroborate

* Such as *Shuwe-Zettan* and *Shuwe-dag-gone*.

this statement; and it must be further remarked, that their occupation in former days is said to have resembled that now allotted to their namesakes in Bengál. The *Dhúngs* of Arracan will not, however, so employ themselves at the present day; endeavouring to conceal their true descent, they are generally rope-makers and fishermen.

Burmahs of pure extraction are rare in *Rambree*; those that retain the name are of mixed blood, and properly termed "*Bundáth*." They are the descendants of those *Burmahs* who accompanied the several *Mey-o-wúns* to the province; uniting themselves with the Mugh women, and remaining in *Rambree* with their families on its being given over to the British.

The class of Musalmans termed *Kuman-thsí** are particularly deserving of notice. There is little doubt but this interesting people owe their descent to that devoted band of warriors which accompanied the unfortunate SHA'H SUJA'H into Arracan. As is well known, both the SHA'H and his followers, (who were numerous) met at first with a friendly reception from *Meng-ka-mong†*, the Rájá of *Rak-khein-preh*. But the repeated representations of the cold-hearted AURANGZEB induced the wretch to adopt another line of conduct; the SHA'H and his troops were several times attacked, and finally defeated. The prince was put to death, and such of his followers as survived the slaughter were made prisoners, and eventually distributed in different parts of the kingdom. Lands and implements of husbandry were assigned to them, and they were further encouraged to marry with the women of the country. Many availed themselves of this permission, and their wives did not object to embrace the faith of Islám. There is a curious circumstance connected with the distribution and final settlement of the *Kuman-thsí* in the province. When brought to the presence of *Meng-ka-mong*, and asked what profession they were individually desirous of adopting, a few who were unable to speak the language of the country, put their hands up to their heads, and pointing out the two fore-fingers, endeavoured to represent an animal with horns; thereby intimating that they wished to follow the occupation of herdsmen. Upon this the Rájá directed a supply of cattle and goats to be given to them, and those who received the latter were placed upon a small island that has since been termed *Tchye-kí-ún‡* (Goat Island). In the time of the Arracan Rájás,

* Kamandar? Bowman? (*Kamánchi* more probably.—ED.)

† I feel a pleasure in giving the name of this individual, in the hope that it may tend to perpetuate his infamy.

‡ Called "*Saddle Island*" by the British.

and even so late as during the Burmah tenure of the country, the *Kuman-thsí* invariably attended the prince royal, or governors on their journey through the several provinces of the empire; preceding them upon the road, and bearing their bows and arrows in their hands. These implements of war are now laid aside, and the *Kuman-thsí* are, in common with others, occupied in such pursuits as are more congenial to the age; being for the most part weavers and dyers, and residing in a separate quarter of the town, the avowed adherents to the Muhammedan faith, but ignorant of the precepts it inculcates, and assimilating in practice to the rest of the population. Seven generations* are said to have passed away since the event above described; yet notwithstanding this lapse of time, and in spite of the similarity of language and attire, the features of the *Kuman-thsí* still betray their superior descent; while for beauty of stature, and agility of limb, they surpass the Muhammedans of India.

With the view of so many houses, and such a population as that contained in *Rambree*, together with the fact of its being the *second city in Arracan*, it is surprising to witness such apparent poverty in the show of empty shops on each side of the street. Here and there a Manchester shawl, a piece of chintz, or printed handkerchief might be seen hung up to view, surrounded with the more homely productions of the country; but the largest and best supplied shop of *Rambree* would scarcely be deemed worthy of notice in any one of the *sadar bazars* of India. Few engaging in trade: the greater part of the population are either idlers, day-labourers, agriculturists, or fishermen, (as circumstances may induce,) having no regular occupation calling for the exercise of a dexterous and *continued* application. It is difficult to ascertain with precision the period of the greatest known prosperity in the town of *Rambree*. Different accounts are given by different people, according to their views, or the ideas they may entertain. Those who admit the population and wealth of *Rambree* to have been greater than they are at present, fix the date of such alleged prosperity during the administration of the Burmah *Mey-o-wun, Keo-dine-Yájah* (A. D. 1805). At that time *Rambree* was the grand emporium of trade; so many as 60 large *godahs* were known to enter the creek from different parts of Bengal, and proceed from thence to Rangoon and Tavoy, receiving at *Rambree* rowannahs spe-

* By Dow's account, it is 170 years ago. I must notice an error that the historian of India has fallen into; there is no river running from any part of Arracan into *Pegu*; the native name for Arracan proper is "*Peygr*" or "*Peygi*," (signifying a large country,) and this word has been evidently confounded with *Pegu*.

cifying the duties they had paid, to secure them from further taxation on their arrival at any intermediate Burmah port. The town of *Rambree*, and indeed the whole island, suffered much in later years in consequence of the insurrection of the *Mugh*s, excited by the Ramu Rájá KIMBRANG, and only subdued by the energetic conduct of NEMYO-SUYA'H*, the Burmah chief to whom the *Mey-o-wun* SAOTI'JA'H had entrusted the defence. This rebellion was followed by a species of retaliation that deprived the town of *Rambree* of nearly the whole of its *Mugh* population. All the *súgris*, merchants, and others suspected of having conspired against the government were put to death, or obliged to fly the country.

It was the invariable, and, in some instances, necessary policy of the Burmese to trust as little as possible to the good will of the conquered. Securing their position by a strong stockade, and separating themselves from the inhabitants, they formed a little garrison of their own in *Rambree*; within this stockade all affairs both civil and military were transacted. The Burmah *Mey-o-wuns* were not, however, inattentive to the comfort of the people, or the embellishment of the town: the large tanks, *Kus*, and *Kioums* now seen at *Rambree*, were either constructed by the *Mey-o-wuns*, or by those who held situations of emolument, under them. Some of these temples are still existing, unscathed by the hand of man or the less hostile elements. Others, again, have crumbled into dust, the remains of those stupendous monuments that have marked the propagation of the Buddhist creed in the most distant parts of the world. Internally they are filled up with earth, the wall being of brick, well cemented together. Relics of GAUTAMA, such as the hair, feathers, bones, &c. of the several creatures whose form he assumed previous to his becoming man, with gold and silver images, dishes, goblets, and other utensils, are deposited in the interior: a certain portion of each placed in the upper, middle, and lower part of the temple. The *Kioums* at *Rambree* town are, as might be expected, larger than those commonly met with on the island. One of these attracts attention from its superior size, and the elegance of its construction. It was built by a native of *Rambree*, named KOMENG-SHUWE-BO, who had been *dewan* to the Burmah *Mey-o-wun* SAOTI'JA'H, and was one of those to whom suspicion of conspiracy was attached, but saved from death at the intercession of the *Chilki*† MOUNG-BO. KOMENG-SHUWE-BO was in later years exalted to the office of *Mey-o-wun* over the island‡ circles, the Burmah *Mey-o-*

* Afterwards *Mey-o-wun* at *Rambree*.

† The name for the Burmah *Superintendent of Police*.

‡ *Mrukyoung, Murajyne, Kweyne-Kgoung, Kyoung-saa-yah, Koukoh, and Múc-du-in-du.*

wín SHUWE-DONG-SA-GA-SU residing at *Rambree*. The latter was subsequently sent on a mission to Benares, and his brother *Mounge* appointed to officiate during his absence. The mission was directed to ascertain the existence of the *Bhodibeng* tree, as well as the site of many places known to have been the scene of GAUTAMA'S early labour. On the return of SHUWE-DONG-SU-GA-SU to the court of Ava, with the information obtained, he took the opportunity of effecting by the most *persuasive* means the dismissal of his rival from office, and from his unremitting but futile endeavours to regain that place by a method equally expensive, KOMENG-SHUWE-BO is now living in comparatively reduced circumstances at the town of *Rambree*.

The change of rule has perhaps been as fatal to the prosperity of the monastic sects, as it has been disadvantageous to those who once constituted the higher classes of the people. The influence voluntarily conceded to the *Phúngrís* by the Burmah *Mey-o-wíns* was astonishingly great, and reminds one much of the power once possessed by the priesthood of the Catholic kingdoms in Europe. In cases where a more peaceable species of intervention had proved unsuccessful, it was not uncommon for the *Phúngrís* to assemble for the rescue of a criminal about to suffer execution. The spot selected for the process of decapitation was in the neighbourhood of a large tree, at the S. E. extremity of the town. The unfortunate criminal, having been previously manacled, was led out for execution between files of Burmah soldiers, and when arrived at the ground was made to kneel with the head inclined, as a mark of obeisance to the ruler of the land, and avowal of the justice of the sentence. In the meantime, the head was severed from the body (generally with a single blow of the dao) by the executioner*, who stood behind waiting the signal for the stroke. It being deemed a crime to take away life, it is conceived, by the worshippers of BUDDHA, an act of piety to endeavour to save from death even the vilest of animated beings; and as little resistance was evinced towards a class held in such peculiar veneration, the *Phúngrís* not unfrequently succeeded in carrying off the criminal before execution had been effected. Taking him to the *Kioun*, he remained there until death or a change of Government secured him from the malice of his enemies, and the vengeance of the law in punishment of his crimes.

* The *executioners* were individuals who had been condemned to death for heinous offences, and subsequently spared, on condition of their devoting their lives to the performance of this odious service. They were at the same time branded upon the cheek to guard against the chances of desertion.

At some little distance below the town, and on the right bank of the creek, is a small village, inhabited by that extraordinary race the *Kaengs*, of whose origin still less seems to be known than what has been imperfectly detailed of other castes. The *Kaengs of Rambree*, by their own account, came down many years ago from the mountainous regions of *Kaladong* and *Kyen-duing-myit*, in Arracan proper; and as they can give no information whatever respecting their first settlement in those places, it is possible that they may be the *aborigines* of the country. Divided into *clans*, and differing from both *Mugh*s and *Burmah*s in feature as well as attire, the *Kaengs* have many peculiar customs of their own, some of which deserve to be noticed. When any one of a clan dies, the body is laid upon a funeral pile, and consumed: the ashes, carefully collected within an earthen vessel, are conveyed to the mountain from whence the clan was known to have originally come, and there deposited in the earth. There is something awfully grand in this manner of disposing of their dead, bespeaking the existence of that love of liberty and of country still engrafted in their souls, which had in some instances rendered them* secure from their enemies. That same spirit of Freedom dictated an observance† which, however revolting it may appear to European ideas, cannot fail to attract the admiration due to a virtuous feeling, that deems honor and reputation of more account than beauty, and has induced the father of a family to disfigure the faces of his daughters the more effectually to preserve them from the contamination of strangers. The mode of performing the operation is as follows: The young maiden is enveloped in a mat, and forcibly held down to the ground, while gun-powder or indigo is rapidly pricked into the skin (over the whole of her face) by means of a pointed instrument. This is generally done at an early age, and the pain produced by it ceases after the lapse of three or four days. So soon as released from the hands of her tormentors, the poor girl is presented to the dogs of the village, and should they evince any signs of anger or surprise, the operation is deemed to have been effectually performed. The *Kaengs* are not very numerous in Arracan, being found more plentifully distributed along the *Yamadong*, and the less elevated mountains in their

* The *Kaengs* of Arracan were on some occasions particularly troublesome to the Burmese invaders, who feared to follow them to their mountain fastnesses.

† The *Kaeng* women are generally very handsome, and the *Burmahs*, as well as their predecessors, several times attempted to possess themselves of their persons: it was with the view of saving their daughters from such degradation that the *Kaengs* instituted the observance here described.

neighbourhood. Residing in the thickest part of the forest, and superior to the *Rakkheins* in hardiness of constitution, as well as bravery of soul, they are chiefly occupied in the pursuit of game, or in the collection of honey, wax, elephants' teeth, and such other forest produce as may meet with a ready sale in the plains. The *Kaengs* of *Rambree* are for the most part engaged in the cultivation of vegetables, and the manufacture of spirituous liquors, which are in general demand with those of their own class, forming an essential ingredient on all occasions of festivity, whether in the celebration of a marriage, or in the more important ceremonies of a funeral. Indifferent to the nature and quality of their food, they not only subsist on vegetables and grain, but eat the flesh of most animals—a preference being given to that of dogs and swine.

The *Kaengs* possess no written records whatever of their descent; and as they can neither read nor write, deeming it superfluous to instruct their children in such matters, it is not surprising that all traces of their origin should be either lost, or enveloped in total obscurity at the present time.

IV.—On the amount of Rain-fall at Calcutta, as affected by the Declination of the Moon. By the Rev. R. EVEREST.

Since my last paper upon this subject I have been enabled to compare the meteorological registers with the Nautical Almanacks. In doing this I have made out a table of the average daily quantity of rain that fell in each rainy season with every $2\frac{1}{2}$ degrees of the moon's declination. I have now the honour to lay it before the Society, and to add, that where the registers were complete, I have begun the average with the first rain that fell in April, and ended it with the last that fell in October.

Average Quantity of Rain in decimals of Inches in the years

Moon's declination.	1824 and										Gen. mean.	
	1823	1825	1826	1827	1828	1829	1830	1831	1832	1833		1834
2°30'	·231	·000	·353	1·187	·152	·288	·320	·365	·189	·364	·345	·345
5°00'	·110	·002	·831	·230	·180	·369	·660	·076	·223	·175	·412	·297
7°30'	·167	·000	·080	·586	·440	·449	·126	·119	·249	·316	·329	·260
10°	·315	·016	·164	·077	·229	·436	·350	·434	·332	·373	·370	·281
12°30'	·142	·153	·688	·078	·252	·373	·267	·141	·132	·079	·237	·231
15°0'	·483	·001	·340	·315	·502	·227	·230	·319	·144	·285	·249	·281
17°30'	·133	·152	·211	·205	·223	·317	·419	·409	·134	·269	·186	·242
20°0'	·196	·036	·305	·261	·632	·251	·234	·311	·180	·386	·253	·277
22°30'	·052	·096	·231						·332	·277	·282	·211
25°	·721	·158							·622	·432	·483	·483
27°30'	1·586											1·580

NOTE.—The periods for which these averages were taken, are for 1823, the months of August and September; for 1824 and 1825, Nov. Dec. Feb. and March; for 1826, May, June, July, August, Sept. Oct.; for 1828, July, Aug. Sept. and Oct.; for the other years, from the first rain in April to the last in October.